



EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT

Bright Futures for Early Childhood and Families

The Bright Futures Fund is a field of interest fund of the Telluride Foundation dedicated to supporting early childhood care and education programs that serve the working parents of the Telluride region. The Fund will create a permanent financial resource that will increase the availability, affordability and quality of these programs. Because of a generous Colorado Tax Credit for contributions to child care the Bright Futures Fund allows individuals and business donors to gain extraordinary tax relief by donating cash gifts before December 31, 2004. To further its goals the Fund plans to leverage local philanthropy to the Bright Futures Fund with grants from federal and state agencies and private foundations in collaboration with local nonprofits.

Though many perceive the Telluride region as an amenity-rich community, the reality is that resort development always results in social and economic impacts that adversely affect the very workforce that sustains and services those amenities. Three obstacles to maintaining an adequate and reliable workforce in an expensive resort community are housing, transportation and child care. These issues must be addressed not only within the resort communities of Mountain Village and Telluride, but also in the outlying towns from which so many of our workers commute. The Bright Futures Fund is your opportunity to invest in a vital community asset upon which our economic stability and workforce quality depends.

The focus of the Bright Futures Grant Program Bright Futures will support three areas of critical need identified by our local Early Childhood Council: Affordability, Quality, and Capacity.

AFFORDABILITY

If parents with children under school age must work, as most in this remote rural area do, they need child care that is accessible, reliable and affordable. Paradoxically, licensed child care programs must meet stringent safety, quality and staffing regulations that make it virtually impossible to offer services that are affordable for our moderate and lower income families. The gap between what it costs to provide a quality child care program and the tuition fees that can be afforded by moderate and lower income working families averages 33%!

Most programs serving our lower income families are either nonprofit organizations that are highly dependent on a variable mix of donations, public assistance and the occasional grant, or are public preschools that receive limited state support. Bright Futures will be a resource for helping to narrow the critical financing gap for these essential nonprofit programs.

QUALITY

Child care workers are among the lowest paid employees in our workforce. In addition, lack of staff training and education, as well as minimal enrichment materials and other teaching resources, often affect the quality of under-financed programs. Bright Futures will provide funding to improve the quality of local child care programs and to further the education and training of child care and early education staff.

CAPACITY

As the Telluride region continues to grow it is imperative that we attract and keep skilled and reliable employees. Employees with families are traditionally among our most reliable workers and they need to be able to access child care. The current capacity of local child care programs already does not meet demand and some Telluride programs have three-year waiting lists. Bright Futures will address the child care capacity issue by helping to fund local child care expansion projects.

For more information, please email info@telluridefoundation.org